



Key Resources – Panel 2

Federal Funding Programs for Water and Wastewater Utilities and Their Customers Impacted by COVID-19

The following are resources pertaining to various federal funding programs that can assist utilities and their customers with financial losses due to COVID-19:

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

EPA's Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds (SRFs) provide communities with low-cost financing for a wide range of water infrastructure projects. The SRFs are a federal-state partnership that can provide loans with interest rates as low as 0% and offer flexible repayment options. State DWSRF programs have a certain amount of federal funds to use on non-infrastructure activities and programs, known as set-asides. Utilities can receive technical assistance through these set-asides.

Utilities that are having difficulty paying back existing SRF loans due to COVID-19 can talk to the SRF representative in their state to see if flexibility or refinancing is available.

Links:

1. For more information, see EPA's webpage: [Drinking Water State Revolving Fund \(DWSRF\) website](#)
2. EPA's [Clean Water State Revolving Fund \(CWSRF\) website](#)
3. The [Water Utility COVID-19 Financial Impact Tool](#) can help drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater utilities assess the financial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on their cashflow. Through a series of questions on revenues, expenses, and cashflow, utilities can better understand their financial health and financial needs.
4. For more information, see [Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act \(WIFIA\)](#)

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

USDA's Water and Environmental Program (WEP) serves populations of 10,000 or fewer for direct loan and grant programs, except for the Loan Guarantee Program which has an eligible population of up to 50,000. WEP provides assistance in three critical areas: financing rural infrastructure at affordable rates, payment assistance to current borrowers, and technical assistance to rural utilities. USDA offers flexible payment schedules on both new and existing loans, if needed, during COVID-19.

Links:

1. For more information on these funding and technical assistance opportunities, visit [USDA Water and Environmental Programs](#).
2. For information on Rural Development COVID-19 Response: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/coronavirus>
3. Electronic application for the USDA Rural Development program: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/rd-apply>

FAQs:

1. [Emergency Community Water Assistance Grants](#)
2. [Water & Waste Disposal Loans & Grants](#)
3. [Water & Waste Disposal Loan Guarantees](#)

The Administration for Children and Families, HHS

Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) provides funds to assist low-income households with water and wastewater bills. LIHWAP grants are available to States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, U.S. Territories, and Federally and state-recognized Indian Tribes and tribal organizations. The target of the grants are low-income households, particularly those with the lowest incomes, that pay a high proportion of household income for drinking water and wastewater services. LIHWAP provides funds to owners or operators of public water systems or treatment works to reduce arrearages of and rates charged to such households for such services.

Links:

1. For more information, see: [Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program \(LIHWAP\)](#).
2. [Information Memorandum](#): Vendor Agreements, Renter Households, Benefits Policy, Use of Funds FAQ
3. [Dear Colleague Letters](#): Funding Release, Alternative Utilities Funding, CSBG Coordination
4. [World Water Week](#): Partnering to Increase Availability, Affordability, and Access to Quality Water and Wastewater Services
5. [Training Resources](#): Use of Funds, Information for Water Vendors
6. [LIHWAP Contact Information](#)

U.S. Department of Treasury

Even as the American economy continues its recovery from the devastating impact of the pandemic, millions of Americans face deep rental debt and fear evictions and the loss of basic housing security. COVID-19 has exacerbated an affordable housing crisis that predated the pandemic and that has exacerbated deep disparities that threaten the strength of an economic recovery that must work for everyone. To meet this need, the Emergency Rental Assistance program makes funding available to assist households that are unable to pay rent or utilities. Two separate programs have been established: [ERA1](#) provides up to \$25 billion under the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, which was enacted on December 27, 2020,

and [ERA2](#) provides up to \$21.55 billion under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, which was enacted on March 11, 2021. The funds are provided directly to states, U.S. territories, local governments, and (in the case of ERA1) Indian tribes. Grantees use the funds to provide assistance to eligible households through existing or newly created rental assistance programs.

Links:

1. Information and resources for ERA grantees: www.Treasury.gov/ERA
2. Educational materials for renters:
<https://www.consumerfinance.gov/coronavirus/mortgage-and-housing-assistance/renter-protections/>
3. Educational materials for landlords:
<https://www.consumerfinance.gov/coronavirus/mortgage-and-housing-assistance/help-for-landlords/>
4. Materials to promote ERA programs (including multi-lingual handouts):
<https://www.consumerfinance.gov/coronavirus/mortgage-and-housing-assistance/housing-insecurity-media-toolkit/rent-support-resources/>